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# CS 601 Christian Ethics

Hugo Magallanes

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**Course Name:**

CS 601 : Christian Ethics

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CS601HM\_Office@asburyseminary.edu (from any other place).

**Welcome:**

What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear "Christian Ethics"? Rules? Christian Morality? A definition of what's wrong and right? Maybe after some thoughtful consideration you would expect a definition of good and evil? or perhaps determining what's sinful and what isn't? Who is saved and who isn't?

Although these questions are very important and key for our development of "Christian ethics," there are other factors and questions that are equally valuable in developing theories and approaches to Christian ethics. In this course, we will explore these factors and the questions, including the ones stated above, in our discussions, readings, and other course activities. So I invite you to this journey in which each of us will be learn different ethical theories and develop our own ethical approach.

**Office Hours:**

Wednesday from 9:00 am - 11:30 am ET

**ExL Support Team:**

For technical support contact *Andy Adams*, ExL\_Support@asburyseminary.edu

For questions related to the ExL program contact *Kevin Osborn*,

ExL\_Director@asburyseminary.edu, or *Amy Jo Adams*,

ExL\_Coach@asburyseminary.edu

For library reference support contact *Hannah Kirsch*,

Hannah\_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu

For interlibrary loans contact *Dot James*, Dorothy\_James@asburyseminary.edu

**Obtaining Library Materials and Reference Assistance**

All ExL students are encouraged to make use of their local library. However, if such services are unavailable or inadequate, ExL students may also obtain library books and journal articles through the mail from Asbury Theological Seminary's B. L. Fisher Library. All requests for books and journal articles should be emailed to the ExL Reference Librarian, Hannah Kirsch (Hannah\_Kirsch@asburyseminary.edu).

Hannah is also available to assist ExL students with reference requests such as how to find citations for books and articles, how to use the various online databases available to ExL students, or how to begin looking for information on a specific topic.

To request material from the B.L. Fisher Library, begin by searching the library's WebPac (online catalog of the library's holdings) or one of the journal databases available on the ExL Virtual Library webpage (found in the Resource Center of your ExL classroom). Then send an email to Hannah citing the sources that you would like to request. If you need help searching the databases, do not hesitate to ask. Please allow 5-10 business days for all requests to be filled. ExL students are billed for the cost of photocopies (5 cents per page) and the cost of shipping. Express mail services (price varies according to weight) and faxing (\$1.50 for the first page and 25 cents for each additional page plus photocopy charges) are also available, but material will generally take 1-2 days from the receipt of the request to be processed. Plan ahead and make your requests early.

### **Windows and Icons:**

The Course Center will contain a copy of the syllabus as well as all class modules.

The Discussion Center will be used for all public communications. Anytime you have a question or comment about the course, the modules, the assignments, or anything else which would be of interest to your classmates and the professor, you should post to the Discussion Center.

The (Class Number) Office is for private correspondence between you and the professor. This will contain items that you do not want to appear publicly before all of your classmates.

The Archives Center will be used for storing conversations that have already taken place during the course of the semester. This keeps the Discussion Center from becoming too unmanageable.

The Chat Center is intended primarily for real-time interaction among students. You can get together with other members to study, ask questions, or to explore topics. *Remember:* None of the conversations carried on in this location are ever saved.

The Resource Center provides access to a number of specific tools available to all ExL students. These include access to the B.L. Fisher Library, chapel services in Estes Chapel, ExL Updates, Guidelines for Success, Helpful Hints, Interesting Links, a Powerpoint Viewer, and a Real Audio Player.

### **Course Description:**

This course has been designed to prepare students for ministry by training them to analyze and address the moral life from a Christian perspective. To enable ministers to equip their congregations for understanding moral responsibility and for practicing ministry with integrity. To assist in training ministers who will draw all persons, including those who are excluded by society, into the care and guidance of the community of faith under the Lordship of Christ. To assist in the training of ministers who will exemplify the Gospel-mandated holy life.

### **Course Objectives:**

#### **At the end of the semester students will be able**

- To provide a biblical basis for the moral life.
- To describe various historical and contemporary Christian interpretations of social and personal moral issues.
- To use the basic vocabulary of ethical analysis.
- To use basic tools of social analysis.
- To explain the Wesleyan emphasis on the various dimensions of holiness, specifically the expectation for personal integrity, moral concern, and social responsibility.
- To recognize and explain at a basic level: the needs, contexts, and insights of various cultural groups and marginalized communities in society and in the church (these may include, but are not limited to, particularity arising from ethnic, gender, class, and geographic locations).
- To explain how responses to moral problems and moral integrity shape congregational life.

### **Course Requirements:**

- 80% Research Paper
- 20% Class Participation

**Participation:** This course is highly interactive befitting for the task of studying Christian ethics and engaging in moral formation. Your engaged participation is crucial for your own learning and for the entire group. Therefore, it is expected that you will post assignments when requested, and respond to your co-learners as required in a thoughtful and informed manner. Your interaction must be informed, demonstrating you have read the material, Your grade participation will be determined by on-time postings and your interaction with and use of the course material.

Some examples of evaluative criteria may include:

Did you give a succinct, understandable statement that reflected your understanding of the course material and its relationship to the question posed?

Did you reflect critically on the interface between course content and personal experience?

Did you post your own answers/responses in a timely way, so as to promote conversation among the members of your team?

How effective were you in generating ideas/proposals for group interaction?

How effective were you in your engagement with the ideas/proposals generated by others on your Team?

Did you respond to your Teammates as per the instructions for the exercise?

Did you attend to issues of form and style appropriate to academic writing?

### **Readings:**

Students are required to complete all assigned readings, to complete and return a "Reading Record," (which will be provided at the beginning of the course) at the end of the semester. Failure to complete reading assignments on time may result in a lowering of the final grade. The deduction for incomplete reading assignments will be up to 10% against the final grade (a full letter grade reduction).

### **Written Work:**

All written work must be typed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing. Follow page limit requirements. There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse. If possible write your paper in a word or wordperfect document.

Please remember that all written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision. For more information on this topic go to the Resource Center and look for "Inclusive Language."

**Research Paper:** Students may choose a specific area to study in greater depth. Possible topic areas include: poverty, child or spouse abuse, AIDS, abortion, homelessness, mental retardation, substance abuse, racial discrimination, environmental issues, public education. Topics should be chosen early in the semester so that students can conduct research and reflect upon interweaving themes. The paper must reflect an approach to the problem that includes a specifically church-centered response. The body or notes of the paper should reflect a working knowledge of resources currently available in the community and church, as well as alternatives and improvements you might prefer. Consult with the professor in choosing your topic. 10-12 pages, May 13 (Tentative).

### **Expectations:**

It is my hope and desire that this course will assist you in developing your own Christian ethic as you interact with your classmates, professor, and with Christian leaders and ethicists found in your readings. I do pray and hope that our lives,

yours and mine, will be transformed and shaped by the conversations and readings into a more Christlike lifestyle.

**What you can expect from me:**

- 1) I will share my opinions and life experiences with you.
- 2) I will provide timely feedback for each of your assignments.
- 3) I will pray for you and for your needs as we work together during this course.
- 4) I will provide academic guidance and insights during the course of this semester.
- 5) I will be available to you during office hours as listed in this syllabus.

**What I expect from you:**

- 1) I expect honesty as you prepare assignments and respect for other members of the class.
- 2) I expect that each student will read the required texts with attention and careful examination.
- 3) I do not expect consensus in dealing with issues, but I do expect informed interaction and respect for opinions that differ from yours.
- 4) I expect that your life will be transformed and that you will use and implement in your ministry some of the key elements that in Christian ethics.

**Online Etiquette:**

The on-line aspect of this class requires good "e-manners."

For example: Using all capital letters means "yelling," if you want to give emphasis to a phrase or word use *italics* or **bold**.

Learn to use symbols to express emotions such as: Smile, happy :) Sadness, :( etc.

In posting your responses to the on-line questions and conversations please remember that your team members do not benefit from hearing your tone of voice or seeing your body language, **so be careful how you put things in writing!** You may be perceived as shouting, when you only meant to add an emphasis.

**Grading:**

Work for CS 601 will be evaluated at a graduate/professional school level.

**A** = 95-100% *Unusually high quality, exceptional work*

**A-** = 90-94% *Far above average, fine work*

**B+** = 87-89% *Above average for graduate work*

**B** = 83-86% *Very good, average for graduate work*

**B-** = 80-82% *Slightly below average for graduate work*

**C+** = 77-79% *Meets requirements, but noticeable  
inadequacies for graduate work*

**C** = 73-76% *Meets requirements, but with significant gaps  
for graduate work*

**C-** = 70-72% *Meets requirements, but serious gaps*

**D+** = 67-69% *Minimal work*  
**D** = 63-66% *barely acceptable*  
**D-** = 60-62% *for specific assignment*  
**F** = *below 60% Failure.*

### **Incomplete Work:**

A grade of "I" denotes that the work of a course has not been completed due to an *unavoidable emergency*, which does not include delinquency or attending to church work or other employment. If the work of the course is incomplete at the end of a term without an emergency, a letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done, with incomplete work counted as "F." From ATS 2001-03 Catalog pag. 29 (emphasis added)

### **How To Submit Work:**

All written work to be submitted to the professor must be typed with 12 point type, one inch margins on all four sides, and true double spacing. Follow page limit requirements. There will be a penalty for late papers commensurate with the degree of lateness and the adequacy of the excuse. If possible write your paper in a word or a wordperfect document and attach it to your e-mail and send it to the office folder.

Please remember that all written work must use inclusive language when reference is made to human beings (male and female). This provides for both greater inclusion and greater precision. For more information on this topic go to the Resource Center and look for "Inclusive Language."

### **Required Reading:**

Dayton, Donald W., Discovering an Evangelical Heritage (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988).  
Miles, Rebekah L. The Pastor as Moral Guide (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1999).  
CS 601 Reading Packet (*readings are not necessarily in order*)

## **Module #3: CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY IN THE VARIOUS SPHERES OF LIFE**

### **Week 10 Christians and Marriage, Family, and Sexuality**

Miles, Rebekah, The Pastor as Moral Guide, pages 76-102.  
Hays, Richard "Homosexuality," in The Moral Vision of the New Testament  
(HarperSanFrancisco, 1996)

### **Week 11 Christians and Economics (Work, Poverty, Wealth)**

Augustine, "Sermon XXXVI," NPNF1, Vol. VI  
Gonzalez, Justo, "John Chrysostom," in Faith and Wealth  
(HarperSanFrancisco, 1990)  
Calvin, John, "On Usury," in Calvin's Ecclesiastical Advice  
(Westminster/John Knox, 1991)  
Wesley, John, "The Danger of Riches"  
Wesley, John, "Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions"  
(see next page for more

required readings)

Arnold, Heini, "Community of Goods--Is It Biblical?" The Plough (March  
1984)  
Neuhaus, Richard John, "Wealth and Whimsy: On Economic Creativity,"  
First Things (Aug./Sept. 1990)  
Polter, Julie, "Why Work?" Sojourners (Jan./Feb. 1997)

## **Week 12 Christians and Politics (Government, Civil Disobedience, Civility)**

"The Martyrdom of the Holy Polycarp," Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 1  
Calvin, John, "Civil Government," The Institutes of the Christian Religion  
Barren Declaration  
King, Martin Luther, "Letter From Birmingham Jail," Why We Can't Wait  
(Harper & Row, 1963)  
Mouw, Richard, "Defending Christian Civility" and "What's Good About  
Pluralism" Uncommon Decency: Christian Civility in an Uncivil

World

(InterVarsity Press, 1992).

Taylor, Daniel "Deconstructing the Gospel of Tolerance," Christianity  
Today  
(January 11, 1999)

## **Week 13 Conclusions**